



Property Maintenance

Summary of the International Property Maintenance Code



The *International Property Maintenance Code* has been adopted by the City of Warren Property Maintenance Ordinance and it governs the maintenance of existing buildings through model code regulations. The provisions of this code apply to all existing structures and to all existing premises and constitute minimum requirements and standards for premises, structures, equipment and facilities for light, ventilation, space, heating, sanitation, protection from the elements, life safety, safety from fire and other hazards, and for safe and sanitary maintenance; the responsibility of owners, operators, and occupants; the occupancy of existing structures and premises, and for administration, enforcement and penalties.

The following is a summary of each chapter in the International Property Maintenance Code:

Chapter 1

This chapter contains provisions for the application, enforcement, and administration of all subsequent requirements of the code. All of the police powers inherent in enforcing minimum standards for the use and maintenance of buildings must follow the actual line of authority from the Constitution to the state to the actual enforcer. Chapter 1 defines the role and responsibility of the authority having jurisdiction.

Chapter 2

This chapter establishes the meaning of keywords and terms used in the code. The code, with its broad scope of applicability, includes terms inherent in a variety of construction disciplines. These terms can have multiple meanings, depending on the context or discipline being used at the time. For these reasons, it is necessary to maintain a consensus on the specific meaning of terms contained in the code. Chapter 2 performs this function by stating clearly what specific terms mean for the purpose of the code.

Chapter 3

This chapter contains requirements regulating the safety, sanitation and appearance of the interior and exterior of structures and all exterior property areas. Chapter 3 provides specific criteria for regulating the installation and maintenance of building components. Chapter 3 also provides guidelines for determining who is responsible for maintaining sanitary conditions and eliminating infestations of insects, rodents, and other pests.

Chapter 4

This chapter establishes the minimum criteria for light and ventilation and identifies occupancy limitations. Minimum light, ventilation, and space requirements are based on the physiological and psychological impact of these factors on building occupants. The purpose of Chapter 4 is to set forth these requirements in the code and to establish the minimum environmental standards for occupiable and habitable buildings.

Chapter 5

This chapter establishes the minimum criteria for the installation, maintenance, and location of plumbing systems and facilities, including the water supply system, water heating appliances, sewage disposal system and related plumbing fixtures. Existing plumbing installations may present unique inspection problems for the code official, as almost all are concealed by finished walls, ceilings and floors. The code official must inspect the visible portions of the system and assess the acceptability of the whole installation.

Chapter 6

This chapter establishes minimum performance requirements for electrical and mechanical facilities and minimum standards for the safety of such facilities. All mechanical and electrical equipment, appliances, and systems must be installed properly to serve the intended purpose. Proper installation, however, does not in itself guarantee safety or performance. All such equipment, appliances, and systems must also be maintained, as they are subject to wear and aging, and may require cleaning, lubrication, adjustment, etc. All materials and components used to construct mechanical and electrical systems have a limited life span and require repair or replacement at various time intervals that are specific to the material or component.

Chapter 7

This chapter establishes minimum requirements for fire safety, life safety and fire protection systems. Building codes regulating new construction are intended to verify these features prior to occupancy, in addition to ensuring that the building has been constructed in a manner that will provide the occupants a relatively safe and secure environment. Once these new structures are occupied, a variety of hazards inherent in their use may arise. Often, these hazards are unanticipated and can affect the overall safety of the occupants. The purpose of Chapter 7 is to address those fire hazards that arise as the result of a building's occupancy. It also provides minimum requirements for fire safety issues that are most likely to arise in older buildings.

Chapter 8

This chapter contains a comprehensive list of all standards that are referenced in the code. As a performance-oriented code, the code contains numerous references to documents that are used to regulate materials and methods of construction. The references to these documents within the code text consist of the promulgating agency's acronym and its publication designation (e.g., ASME A17.1) and a further indication that the document being referenced is listed in Chapter 8. Chapter 8 contains all of the information necessary to identify the specific referenced document.

For more information regarding property maintenance requirements, contact the City of Warren Building Code Department at (814) 723-6300 or www.cityofwarrenpa.gov.